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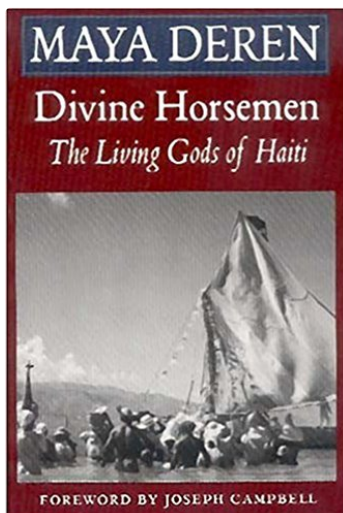
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Paperback – October 1, 1983

by [Maya Deren](#) (Author), [Joseph Campbell](#) (Foreword)

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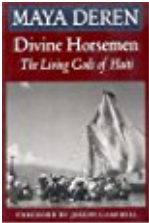
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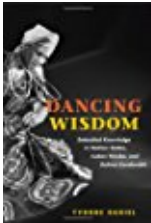
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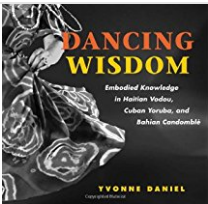
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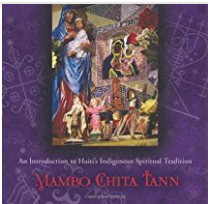
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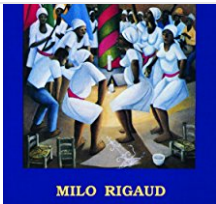
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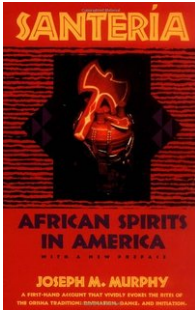
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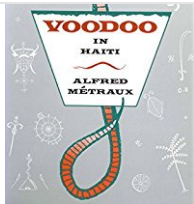
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More than thirty years have elapsed.... But her work...continues to move and inform. --Journal for the Society of Ethnomusicology

About the Author

Maya Deren's life is the subject of a multi-volume biography in progress (see: The Legend of Maya Deren). Born in Kiev in 1917, Maya Deren emigrated to the United States with her parents a few years later, grew up mainly in Syracuse, New York, and attended Syracuse University. A social activist from her teens, she became interested first in dance and subsequently in filmmaking. Throughout the 1950s, until her premature death in 1961 at the age of 44, Maya Deren was a leading exponent of experimental cinema and considered one of its most influential artists. She first traveled to Haiti to film dances in 1947, and returned in following years for lengthy stays. The work in Haiti led to the classic ethnographic study, Divine Horsemen, written with the encouragement of Joseph Campbell, as well as audio recordings and a documentary film which was later edited by Teiji and Cherel Ito.

Product details

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Publisher: McPherson (October 1, 1983)

Language: English

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Biography

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For those looking to seriously research and learn about Haitian Vodou, Deren's book is a must-read. For those interested in an overview, this is not the book. The reality is that Deren seems to write largely for the sake of the art, with less concern for the communication of the subject matter. I judge the book at a higher standard partially because it is considered to be the standard for resources on Haitian Vodou, and partially because of the length of the book. For as much time as it takes to get through this book, I feel that my understanding should have increased more than it did.

I did not find this to be easy reading, and often stumbled over the flowery, albeit awkward sentences. She writes with passion, but she writes in the style of a memoir. But this is not a memoir. It could have been, but it's a book about the beliefs and traditions of Haitian Vodou. For that purpose, she could have cut the book in half and been more efficient to be more concise.

The most useful sections were the appendices at the end, speaking about marriage between voodoo and loa, and about indigenous influences in the religion.

If you're serious about Haiti or Vodou or religious studies, it's a good thing to read. But take your time. You'll need it.

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Bravo for Maya - after seeing the films, this book was a logical must have

By [Kytka Jezek](#) on December 17, 2014

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I have Maya Deren's films "In the Mirror of Maya Deren," and "Maya Deren: Experimental Films." and as a result of seeing them, I was moved to purchase this book as well. I am fascinated that she had the access she did and that she documented it all. Yes, as some other reviewers say, it tends to be a "time capsule" but when we are looking into the past, should that exactly be what it needs to be? I am grateful to Maya and all of the work she did, giving us a glimpse into things we would never find in ordinary life.

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A True Classic

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If you are interested in Haitian Voodoo, you should read this. You might be tempted to pass it up because of its copyright date, but don't skip it.

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This is one of the best books I have ever read.

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Classic Voudun Text!!!

By [Don](#) on January 12, 2013

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A great reference book to the classic movie. It also provides an awesome bridge of info that allows one to look deeper than the surface into the world of Voodoo. If you enjoyed the movie then you'll LOVE the book

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marshmallow44

By [Marshmallow44](#) on April 27, 2014

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In the first pages of this book Deren compares the place of the artist in society with that of indigenous cultures. It is funny, sharp, and deeply intelligent. Yes, she is poetic, and writes with an artist's sensibility, but I am most interested in people and cultures, and this book is as psychologically and culturally and religiously sophisticated as any book I've read. Included in her chapters are examinations of the role of ritual in social coherence, creative expression (for everyone in the culture, not just the "geniuses"), and in individual development. Of course, we can idealize pre-industrial and pre-capitalist cultures, and life was, as Deren tells it (and as we know) excessively difficult for the slaves and their descendants who were forced to leave Africa

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[Report abuse](#)**Vodoun: an accurate, non-sensational resource**By [jeanne christopherson](#) on November 4, 2013Format: Paperback **Verified Purchase**

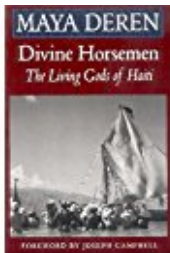
I have given away countless copies of this book to students wanting to get an inside, accurate understanding of Haiti and the Vodoun religion. It corrects the racist, ignorant, sensational accounts of this beloved and beautiful religion from the vantage point of an initiate. Maya Deren was an experimental film maker who went to Haiti in the forties to make an "art" film. When she realized that dance could not be separated from music and together they could not be separated from belief, she put her cameras in the closet and became a participant. She was also the red headed secretary for Katherine Dunham's black dance company.

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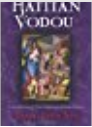


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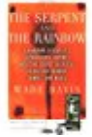
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